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Letter dated 3 July 2013 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the United States Mission to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, under the Presidency of the United States, the Security Council will hold an open debate entitled "Protection of civilians in armed conflict: protection of journalists" on Wednesday, 17 July 2013. In order to help steer the discussion on the subject, the United States has prepared the attached concept note (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Rosemary A. **DiCarlo**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 3 July 2013 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the United States Mission to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept paper for the open debate of the Security Council entitled "Protection of civilians in armed conflict: protection of journalists" (17 July 2013)

During its presidency of the Security Council in July, the United States will convene an open debate to focus on the protection of journalists. This session will build on Council resolution 1738 (2006) and the presidential statement of 12 February 2013 on the protection of civilians in armed conflict (S/PRST/2013/2), which includes explicit language on protecting journalists. It will provide Council members with an opportunity to demonstrate the Council's support for providing journalists with the necessary access and protections and for recognizing the valuable information and insights they provide indirectly to the Council in its discussions and deliberations, while learning about and considering the frequency with which acts of violence are committed against journalists and associated media personnel in many parts of the world. The session will also serve as a reminder that all perpetrators of violence against journalists must be held accountable, and that all States have a responsibility to combat impunity.

Background

Since the Security Council last considered the issue of the protection of journalists in 2006, violence against journalists has continued worldwide; in particular, there has been an increase in murders and imprisonments. In 2012 alone, 121 journalists were killed globally, more than 200 were imprisoned and many more were targeted.[a] Given the critical role of journalism in informing the international community's understanding of conflict areas, we seek to underscore the vital importance of protecting journalists in these situations. The right to freedom of opinion and expression is a human right guaranteed to all, including journalists, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Moreover, journalists are entitled to the same rights online that they have offline. The 2012 report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity offers additional insights, which the Council should consider.

Open debate

We would welcome the participation of Member States in this Security Council thematic session chaired by the Acting Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations. This session will demonstrate the Council's appreciation for the contributions of journalists and the risks they take. To help frame the Council's discussion in July, we plan to invite a number of media representatives to discuss issues related to the protection of journalists, including

[a] The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization produces reports and data regarding the safety of journalists and on the killing of journalists. More information is available from www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/freedom-of-expression/safety-of-journalists/.

their personal experiences in the field and efforts to protect their staff. These briefers will also discuss the risks they and their colleagues face in informing the broader public about threats to international peace and security, including the challenges related to access and security.

During the session, Council members may wish to address the following in their statements:

- Observations on conflict journalism
- Best practices for protecting journalists
- Examples of relevant accountability mechanisms and efforts to combat impunity
- Discussion of investigations of and prosecutions for acts of violence or fatal incidents in which journalists, media workers and related personnel are the victims
- Ways in which civil society has assisted in protecting journalists
- The importance of new and emerging technologies in providing timely and useful information in conflict areas and the associated need to maintain free and open access to these tools

Briefers

In addition to receiving a briefing from Deputy Secretary-General, Jan Eliasson, we will receive briefings from the experts below on the issue of the protection of journalists.

Richard Engel (NBC). Richard Engel has covered a wide range of conflicts, including in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Gaza, Libya, Egypt and Somalia. As NBC News chief foreign correspondent, Engel is widely regarded as one of America's leading foreign correspondents for his coverage of wars, revolutions and political transitions around the world over the last 15 years. Previously, Mr. Engel worked for ABC News and served as Middle East correspondent for "The World", a joint production of the BBC World Service, Public Radio International and WGBH-Boston radio, from 2001 to 2003. He has also written for *USA Today*, Reuters, Agence France-Presse (AFP) and Jane's Defence Weekly. In December 2012, Mr. Engel and his crew members were abducted in Syria and freed by Ahrar al-Sham five days later. Mr. Engel wrote the book *A Fist in the Hornet's Nest: On the Ground in Baghdad Before, During and After the War* about his experience covering the war in Iraq from Baghdad. His newest book is *War Journal: My Five Years in Iraq*.

Kathleen Carroll (Associated Press/Committee to Protect Journalists). Kathleen Carroll is Executive Editor and Senior Vice-President of the Associated Press (AP) and Vice-Chair of the board of directors of the Committee to Protect Journalists. At AP, Ms. Carroll oversees all journalists based at the organization's 243 bureaus in 97 countries and manages the security threats that confront her reporters on a daily basis. She has also worked for Knight Ridder, where she served as Washington Bureau Chief and supervised both Washington and overseas coverage for the newspaper group. She has served on the Pulitzer Prize board since 2003.

Mustafa Haji Abdinur (AFP). Mustafa Haji Abdinur is a self-taught Somali journalist and radio correspondent. Mr. Abdinur founded Radio Simba, which has over 2 million listeners across southern and central Somalia. In 2009, he was awarded an International Press Freedom Award by the Committee to Protect Journalists. In his powerful acceptance speech, Mr. Abdinur spoke of fellow journalists and friends he had lost trying to bring the story of Somalia to the world. He said: "There used to be more of us. But the intensity of the war has forced so many to flee. In the past two years, there has been an exodus of journalists. There are more Somali reporters in Nairobi than Mogadishu. Needless to say, it's too dangerous for foreign journalists to cover what is now one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world."

Ghaith Abdul-Ahad (*The Guardian*). Ghaith Abdul-Ahad is an Iraqi reporter and photojournalist who has reported from many countries, including Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, Yemen and Lebanon, publishing stories and photographs for news outlets such as *The Guardian*, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times* and *The Times* (London). As a deserter from Saddam Hussein's army, he lived underground in Baghdad for six years. He began doing street photography in 2001 and was determined to document conditions in Baghdad during the war. This aroused suspicion. He was arrested three days before the end of major combat operations but was able to escape by bribing his guards. In October 2010, Mr. Abdul-Ahad was imprisoned for five days by Taliban fighters he had gone to interview. In 2011, he entered Libya to report on the conflict and was detained for roughly two weeks by the Libyan army. He is now reporting on the conflict in Syria.